



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

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VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES COME TO THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

The 18th National Veterans Golden Age Games, a national sports and recreational competition sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), will take place July 18-23, 2004 at the Fresno Convention Center and other area venues. Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs Tom Johnson will attend the opening ceremonies on Sunday, July 18th and will present medals to the winners during the Thursday, July 22nd medal ceremony.

Events at the games are open to all U.S. military veterans age 55 or older who are receiving care at any VA medical facility or state veterans home. Hosted by VA's Central California Health Care System, the games have competition in swimming, bicycling, horseshoes, bowling, croquet and a pentathlon (softball hit, discus, shot put, basketball free throw and air guns).

The athletes compete in open and wheelchair divisions in specific age groups. Although most are veterans of World War II and the Korean War, increasing numbers of Vietnam-era veterans are participating in this annual nationwide competition.

Joining long-term co-sponsors VA and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the first time as a co-sponsor is Veterans Canteen Service (VCS).

The event begins with a gala opening ceremony at 7 p.m. on Sunday, July 18, in the exhibit hall of the convention center. Festivities include a musical salute to veterans by singer Lee Greenwood, a color guard, a parade of flags from each participating state, and a ceremonial lighting of the torch.

For the first time this year, the National Veterans Golden Age Games will serve as a qualifier for the National Senior Olympics, to be held June 3-8, 2005, in Pittsburgh. The National Senior Olympics is a community-based member of the United States Olympic Committee and recognizes senior U.S. athletes in several age groups.

For more information about the National Veterans Golden Age Games and other VA national rehabilitation programs, visit VA's web site at www.va.gov/vetevent/gag/2004

AMVETS

The California Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes AMVETS for their constant and continual support of the Veterans Homes of California and the veterans who live there. CDVA's relationship with AMVETS goes back many years and we hope this relationship continues for many years to come. Among AMVETS many demonstrations of support for our veterans we find:

1. When budget cuts threatened to shut down the KVET studio at the Yountville Veterans Home, AMVETS came through with a significant donation, which allowed the station to continue its mission of disseminating educational information and entertainment to the homes 1,100

residents. KVET is a vital link for room-bound residents to the rest of the veterans' home. To this day, AMVETS continues to be KVET's most important sponsor.

2. AMVETS has donated more than \$500,000 to the Yountville Veterans Home for KVET and the home's extensive media program. Their donations have helped the home purchase new analog equipment, to convert analog equipment to digital format, to expand to 3 stations, and to purchase updated equipment for the homes Oral History Program and the publication of the homes monthly newsletter.
3. In addition, AMVETS has purchased a variety of vehicles for use at the veterans' homes. They have purchased and donated 18 golf carts and an 8-passenger van with capacity for 2 wheelchairs to the Yountville veterans home and 2 18-passenger busses, with one for use specifically by residents in wheelchairs and 2 golf carts to the Chula Vista Veterans Home. These vehicles have brought much freedom to the residents who enjoy them almost on a daily basis.
4. AMVETS has also sponsored the entire cost of Chula Vista's "Founders Day" celebration every year since the home opened. This annual event attracts the participation of prominent business leaders, elected officials, veteran leaders, and active duty Navy and Marine flag officers and enlisted.
5. AMVETS also operated a very active chapter on campus at the Chula Vista Veterans Home, AMVETS Post 700.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs extends a grateful hand to AMVETS and thanks them for their generous support of the veterans living in the Veterans Homes of California. May our congenial relationship continue into the 21st and 22nd centuries.

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